

THE PROLOGUE  
FAMILY STUDIES IN GHANA 1920-1970

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When I was invited to review the development of Family Research in Ghana for the past fifty years, I realised that it was an impossible task. I was compelled gloomily to reflect that it is just some ten years short of the length of that time, that I myself have been engaged in these and related studies.

I am not acquainted with all the recent voluminous literature on family law, systems of land tenure, chiefship, etc. of post independence Ghana, but a quick glance suggests that the bulk of attention is given to the relevant social institutions of Akan Ghana. One reason I suppose is that the historical and scholarly literature on Akan Ghana is larger and is more sophisticated than almost any similar body of material on any African society outside the Republic of South Africa, certainly more than any other group in Ghana.

Of course the beginnings of social research, in the widest sense, on the general topic of The Family in Ghana go back to the early attention paid to the Akan peoples, mainly because they were the first to be exposed to the intrusion of external, western, cultural, political and economic forces and to be brought together in due course into the general framework of the colonial era. Leaving aside a number of early contributions, by Government officials, missionaries and local scholars, (many of which are well summarised in J.G. Frazer's Totemism and Exogamy Vol.1 1910,) the first major contribution, during the past fifty years, to the body of knowledge we are adding to at this conference must surely be regarded

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as Rattray's book of 1923 entitled Ashanti. This was his first essay in ethnology. At the time he was just beginning the researches to which he was to devote himself during the next twenty years or so as Government Anthropologist and it is significant that its central theme was the descent and kinship system of the Ashanti. I knew Rattray well, and it was owing to him that I chose the Gold Coast, as it then was, as the area in which I was to carry on my field research. In this connection, perhaps, the best excuse I personally can give for accepting the present invitation, is that I can claim to be the main living link in the anthropological chain that stretches from Rattray to the present generation, here so well represented by contributors to this conference! - (leaving aside of course my distinguished contemporary, Dr. M.J. Field)\*. Rattray got his anthropology from R.R. Marrett and C.G. Seligman. He could not strictly speaking be classified as a "functionalist"; but he was so scrupulous, and sensitive an ethnographer that like, for example, Junod on the Bathonga before him, he did in fact contribute data that still lend themselves very well to "functionalist" and "structuralist" analysis. This is especially true of his great book on Ashanti Law and Constitution. It is important to add that he knew and worked through the Ashanti language in a way that was later regarded as essential in "functionalist" ethnography. He was also greatly helped by his study of Roman law.

Speaking as an anthropologist rather than as a "Ghanologist", I am bound to see social and cultural studies in a wider context. Rattray's first book came just at a time when the nature of matrilineal forms of familial organisation was incisively being examined by Malinowski and later his students, notably Reo Fortune and Audrey Richards, who also worked in matrilineal social systems. From the point of view of family studies, these researches in other parts of the world, together with Rattray's work, put into the foreground certain features of matrilineal familial organisation that have remained issues ever since. In the first place, they introduced the characteristically and significantly anthropological - as opposed

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\*It is with deep regret that I must record that Dr. Field died in June 1972. She was still actively engaged in the preparation of her researches for publication.

to legal or sociological - approach, that is, an approach that places the family in its critical context of the kinship and descent systems.

This is an aspect of our researches that still needs labouring for it affects the whole notion and conceptualization of the family. Rattray used this term, the family, following the practice of laymen, Government officials and above all the lawyers and the judiciary of his period, but his work gave it a new content - a content on which we later anthropologists were able to build the more rigorous, exact and more appropriate terminologies current among us today, though I regret to say not yet, to the best of my knowledge, fully naturalised in other branches of study related to the family. Rattray brought out the significance of the descent group and of the complementary patrilineal dimension in Akan family structure. He drew attention to the relevance of the institution of cross-cousin marriage as an index of the norms and of the cultural premises implicit in the family system. Above all, he also drew attention to the significance of religious and metaphysical beliefs and concepts in the play of forces that go on in kinship, marriage and descent group structure in Akan society. And I think he contributed what was to become a notable feature of studies in this field in British social anthropology, that is to say the realisation that these familial institutions cannot be properly understood without taking into account their legal and political implications. It is one of the fortunate characteristics of the cultures and social structures native to Ghana that Akan society, very conspicuously, and all Ghanaian societies in different degrees and different ways, exhibit these connections to the trained anthropological eye.

Rattray overlapped with that Akan scholar of near genius, Dr. J.B. Danquah, whom I also had the privilege of knowing quite well. His works, however which were primarily legal and philosophical, lacked the anthropological solidity and wealth of detail of Rattray's or of the contemporary researches among the Ga of M.J. Field. I am incidentally glad to see that there has been a revival in research on

Ga kinship and family structure, the special theoretical importance of which was brought to our notice by M.J. Field nearly forty years ago. Her work brought to the fore an aspect of familial systems that had not been given the attention it deserves by Rattray or Danquah or any of the other students of Ghanaian institutions (mainly government officials) working at the time, namely the great significance of residence patterns. I remember how this struck me when Dr. Field, with true scientific liberality, took me round some of the Ga villages in which she was working when I first came here in 1934. Her research, supplementing Rattray's in many ways - for example, on the subject of the connection between family structure and religious and metaphysical beliefs about maternal blood and paternal spirit - demonstrated the consistency that exists between descent, sex alignments, and kinship, on the one hand, and residential arrangement, on the other - namely, the pattern of divided residence as between male and females of common descent; but the principle has much wider implications than Field perceived.

I must now I fear, bring Fortes into the picture! This enables me incidentally, to scotch one persistent canard which turns up in the most unexpected quarters. I see that even my distinguished colleague Jack Goody cannot refrain from talking about "decolonisation of the social sciences". Again, in an article published in your Research Review (No.3 1966 page 3), no less a scholar than Professor Haberland claims that German African Studies could be pursued "undisturbed in the liberal atmosphere of the (Weimar) Republic between 1918 and 1933". By contrast he implies that in Western Europe, - "where pragmatic points of view prevailed under the motto (that is his own motto) research will be done that is at the moment important for the administration of the African colonies", - research was not free. What nonsense! And how depressing to find this jibe, so often thrust at us in Soviet and to some extent in American journals in the 1940s and 1950s, now repeated with the unctuous addition that the German "consciousness of history enables us to avoid errors of the functionalist point of view directed or determined by colonialist interest". I wish to assert

emphatically and definitively that this is pure fantasy. At no time was I or my contemporaries - for instance Nadel working in Nigeria, or Rattray or Meek or Field before us or others later, like Tait or Goody - ever under pressure to contribute to the objectives of the colonial Government or the colonialist policy. It is true that Goody was given his opportunity to carry out his field research by grants from the then Colonial Social Research Council and so were a number of others, but no strings were tied to these grants. I, myself, like Nadel and like our German colleague Gunther Wagner working in East Africa, who subsequently became a Nazi official, was given the opportunity by the International African Institute and we drew up our research plans in close consultation with the German Director, Professor D. Westermann and the French Director, Professor Labouret. As to the jibe at functionalism, anybody who can find traces of colonialist bias in the publications of such older functionalists as Schapera, Evans-Pritchard, Audrey Richards and myself is a very clever man. It is necessary sometimes to stand up for the misrepresented past.

Now to be more serious. The "functionalist" point of view - building, as far as Ghana is concerned, on Rattray, Field and some other works going back even before to the nineteenth century, which I will not enumerate here - led my generation in particular to a new level of analysis. It appears in my own field research as well as in the work of my friend David Tait and subsequently influenced the work of my pupils including K.A. Busia, A.A.Y. Kyerematen, J.R. Goody and most recently Susan D. Brown. It also appears in the work of the next generation of our pupils and colleagues. What I think deserves special emphasis is that the regional contribution of our researches brought the almost forgotten north into the picture for Ghanaian social anthropology.

What is the special contribution of some of these studies carried out in northern Ghana, particularly those among the Lo Dagaa the Konkomba and the Tallensi? First I think the demonstration of how

intensive ethnographic field research, in the functionalist and structuralist frame of theory, pays off. More specifically, our main contribution lay in introducing conceptual rigour and precision, based on detailed descriptive ethnography, into the analysis of local, political and above all family systems. What we sought in the first place to do, was to clarify the significance for the peoples we were studying, of descent, as a concept and a basis of social organisation. We were lucky I think in working in societies still relatively outside the orbit of what has come to be called "modernisation". What enabled us to see traditional institutions in full bloom was this opportunity. We were also lucky in working with settled subsistence farmers following a relatively homogeneous and undifferentiated economic pattern, which made the sort of topics and data we were interested in stand out very clearly. Lastly, we were lucky in working with politically uncentralised segmentary societies. Thus we were confronted initially with the phenomenon of social systems wholly founded on kinship, familial and descent structures, with which we could see, speaking as functionalists, the whole way of life inextricably bound up. We could relate these kinship, descent and familial structures directly to the economics of the household and of the local group, to patterns of land use and land tenure, to the handling of property relations, and in a very important way, to religious concepts and values. We could see how relations between these descent-based social segments on the political plane emerged and we could observe how the religious system of ancestral worship worked to bring to the fore the deep sense of continuity, which has always been emphasised in Africa, between the dead, the living and the yet unborn, the past, the present and the future generations. We were lucky, let me emphasize, in working with peoples where this was thrust in front of us inescapably. Thus we were compelled to work in terms of the first principle of functionalism, which to put it in simple language is to trace out how things hang together consistently in a given social system.

Probably the first direct contribution to family

studies made by the functionalist ethnographers was the clarification of the basic concepts and this is still continuing. It became obvious that a rigorous distinction must be drawn between unilineal descent concepts and structure, - upon which are founded local, political, ceremonial and religious alignments, in the case of the north based on patrilineal descent, in Akan areas on matrilineal descent, - on the one hand, and on the other the domestic family organisation which is coresidential, is based on exogamous marriage and has quite a different functional status in the social system. Descent groups, we were able to show, are perpetual corporations, and this was the first time this concept was fully exploited in the anthropological analysis of Ghanaian Societies. Membership of these corporations we could see on the ground as being based on credentials of unilineal descent, either the paternal, that is agnatic, or the maternal or matrilineal line. Thus the notion of a descent group as a perpetual corporation, as it was originally formulated by Maine in his Ancient Law, was one of the first steps in the conceptual clarification achieved in the post-Rattray period, though it was all implicit in Rattray's work. In other words we came by observation upon the principle that the descent group is, to use the latest terminology, a perpetual juristic person, geared to the ancestor cult, to political status and to ritual exclusiveness. It therefore determines, for each person, his political and juridical status, and consequently, regulates citizenship and such incidents of citizenship and of juridical status as rights of residence and of land holding and the lines of inheritance and succession.

The family, strictly speaking, in our terminology, in all Ghanaian societies is a different structural group, as I have indicated, because it is essentially the productive unit in the economic sense, and the reproductive association in the demographic and social sense, and it is not a perpetual unit. Every family follows a developmental cycle and has, therefore, a particular life history. The way this feeds into the descent group structure was most brilliantly demonstrated by my late friend David Tait, (then working at the University of Ghana) in his study of the Konkomba.

He showed that the descent group must be understood as a system in a continuous process of segmentation and coalescence - what nowadays is called the dialectical process of segmentation and coalescence, or as Evans Pritchard put it in his book The Nuer, which started us all off, the continuous process of fission and fusion.

Thus the time dimension was added to our conceptual apparatus round about the nineteen fifties, calculated not only in relation to the individual life cycle, but in relation to the succession of generations. The model was especially useful when applied to the family in the strict sense, in the form of the analytical scheme of the developmental cycle, of which a notable example is to be found in Jack Goody's paper on The Lowiili and Lodagaa in The Developmental Cycle in Domestic Groups, (1958). We showed also that there is bound to be in every social system based on kinship and descent, or in every sector of a social system based on kinship and descent, a complementarity, that is a complementary balance between the reckoning of decent, or as we put it at another level, of filiation, in one parental line, generally for political and jural and also the concomitant ritual purposes, and the reckoning and the recognition of kinship connection for non-jural and non-political purposes, as a rule, through the other parent. This takes up again another theme, which was implicit in the work of Rattray and Field, and was first given theoretical formulation in a celebrated paper dealing with South African Bantu social organisation in South Africa by A.R. Radcliffe Brown in 1924. You cannot really detach Ghanaian social anthropology from African social anthropology in general. They make one totality, work in different areas being mutually stimulating and instructive.

Here I am afraid I must be egotistical and refer again to the work by members of the Cambridge School of Social Anthropology, simply because it so happens, through an accident of history, that we have devoted a lot of attention to Ghana. To give an example, my colleague Jack Goody took up the theme of the complementarity of paternal and maternal connections



implied in Radcliffe-Brown's paper and adumbrated in my studies of the Tallensi, and applied it to his work among the Lowiili and Lodagaa. He was able thus to elucidate what we had previously only guessed at from the French writers on his area, that is to say, the elaboration of this complementary relationship into double descent systems marked by the attachment of different categories of property, of marriage rules and of ritual practices to each line. This was later investigated in detail in his book Death, Property and the Ancestors, where he took up another theme of great relevance in any study of the family and one that tends to be overlooked but is fundamental. I refer to the problem of the institutions for transmitting and redistributing the assemblage of statuses and offices that make up a jural and social person after his physical death, which again I had stumbled upon among the Tallensi and Rattray had discussed at some length in dealing with such matters as kuna awaree among the Ashanti and which underlines all processes of inheritance and succession.

I should add that it was about this time that we introduced into the descriptive studies of ethnographers some attention to numerical validation, attempts to provide numerical checks on our descriptive statements. The necessity of this was particularly borne in on me when I was fortunate enough to do some field research in Ashanti in 1945. Of course quantitative methods were by then not a novelty in social anthropology. I had used elementary addition and subtraction to show how stable over time a Tallensi joint family was and others had used these methods elsewhere in Africa, notably I. Schapera in South Africa, in his pioneering work on land tenure and on labour migration in Bechuanaland and Daryll Forde in his work in South-East Nigeria. But the need was thrust upon me when I was attempting to make sense of the apparent heterogeneity of Ashanti domestic residence patterns, in a period of what seemed to be rapid social change. I was able to do this by relating post-marital residence patterns to the developmental cycle of the family, which is correlated both with the reproductive stages of the women and the maturational stages of the offspring, as well as with

certain intrinsic norms and values reflected in the economic and juridical institutions, both modern and traditional, in Akan social systems, relative to the matrilineal descent system on the one hand and to the complementary dimension of paternal filiation on the other. Other variables of a demographic and of local nature also appeared relevant and this tempted me into a demographic enquiry and other quantitative studies most of which, I regret to say, are not yet published, though some of the data are known from incidental publications on the subject of marriage.

This and subsequent research in Ashanti brought to the fore the peculiar and distinctive problems of the matrilineal family and kinship system, that is the conflicts of privilege and right, responsibilities and commitments, as well as of sentiments and attitudes that beset the partners to every Ashanti marriage to some degree or another and appear in almost all matrilineal systems in the world. These conflicts are due to the diverse and opposed statuses of individuals as matrisiblings on the one hand and as spouses on the other, as parents on the one hand and as parental matri-kinsmen on the other. All these matters are well known to you and all these run as a constant theme through some of the papers we will be considering today.

An important contribution to these researches came at about this time, from Dr. Busia then working under my supervision at Oxford. What he made me aware of - and this was confirmed by a now published Oxford B. Litt. Thesis on Inter-state boundary litigation in Ashanti by Dr. A.A.Y. Kyerematen - was the function of descent status due to recognised matrifiliation acquired by birth, as a source of credentials for citizenship in the political community - a theme I have recently elaborated elsewhere - and the significance of this for the whole structure of kinship and descent institutions. The most striking thing about Ashanti and the Akan descent concepts is the precise formulation, and the institutionalisation in traditional thought, more precisely in traditional, political and legal thought, of the concept of the matrilineal lineage as a single, ideally perpetual,

juristic person, and not as an economic organisation or a property-centred corporation as some people thought, but quite definitely as a juristic and political entity. This is an interpretation which many of you know goes back to the writings of Sarbah. I remember reading Sarbah on Fanti customary law and puzzling over a remark of his to the effect that there was no such thing as inheritance or succession in the Akan family as he called it, since it was a corporate entity. Elaborate that thesis and we get to the present position. As the Ashanti put it, every matrilineage is nipa koro one person. It was somewhat obscured by Rattray, owing to his use of the word "family" before he realised the implications of what he was writing, and is more accurately conveyed by our current terminology when we speak of the matrilineage as the corporate group.

Busia's slight but penetrating survey of Sekondi in 1951 brought out the picture of the urban conditions, I am tempted to say the urban 'pathology' of family organisation in Southern Ghana for the first time in an ethnographically as well as sociologically relevant form. This brings me to the nineteen fifties and the decade between 1950 and 1960. I know I have omitted many important events in the history of this subject in between. But, as I say, this is an improvisation and I hope you will bear with me. This decade 1950 to 1960 is marked by the beginning of the landslide in Ghanaian anthropological and social studies that now makes Ghana one of the most sought after countries for social and anthropological research in Africa. The American invasion was capably inaugurated, under the inspiration of M.J. Herskovits, by Christensen's work on the Fante, to be followed by the rather slighter study by Lystad in Ashanti and then by the urban researches of Daniel McCall in Koforidua. Perhaps it may be that I am not well enough attuned to this work to be able to see its full implications, but I do have the feeling that it did not contribute any conceptual or methodological advances beyond where we had got to around 1950-51. At that point in the history of our subject, it was outside West Africa, notably in Zambia and in South Africa that further advances on

the methodological and theoretical side were taking place, relevant to our understanding of the way in which matrilineal family systems work. I refer to the work of Gluckman and his colleagues, Elizabeth Colson, Clyde Mitchell and Vic Turner. It is in particular through Clyde Mitchell's study of the matrilineal Yao, in what was then Nyasaland, Colson's work on the Tonga of Zambia, and Turner's studies among the Ndembu that the basic structural significance of intra-matrilineage tensions leading to witchcraft beliefs and accusations in contraposition to the benign relations on the patrilineal side, became apparent and shed new light on the dynamics of intra-familial and intra-lineage conflicts and stress. There are parallels to Mitchell's observations (later confirmed and elaborated by Marwick) among the Akan matrilineal systems but this is a theme that still awaits full attention in this part of the world. It has been touched on by various writers notably by M.J. Field in her latest psychiatric researches, but I am bound to say that we do not yet understand all its implications. Witchcraft and its relations to family structure has also been tackled, recently, in a very interesting and important paper by Esther Goody on Gonja witchcraft and others have made a start at examining these matters from other points of view.

I should like to go back now to Jack Goody's work in northwestern Ghana. I suggested to him that he should work there, when he was at Oxford working under my supervision, with a rather selfish purpose in mind. I wanted to have an independent check on my analysis of the Tallensi social structure, in an area of cultural affinity but somewhat different social structure, and it hardly needs saying how brilliantly he contributed to this. If I have lately found myself differing from him, it is in relation to the proper emphasis to be put on property as the determinant of corporate descent group structure. This is an aspect that he has tended to give very big weight to. I myself see property in rather a different way whether it takes the form of land or chattels or what you will. I see it as the medium through which familial and kinship relations are, so to speak, given cultural and material form, not as

the determinant of the structural arrangements and norms; and, as I have indicated, the more I have examined the literature and data, the more convinced am I that the corporate descent organisations we meet with in Ghana are to be conceived, fundamentally, as on-going juristic personalities and not as property-holding corporations. Lengthy genealogies, of which I have collected a great many, going back fifteen or more generations, are not preserved either in the patrilineal north or in the matrilineal south as a charter for property relations or property possession. They are preserved as a charter of political, jural and religious status relations, claims, rights and duties - a point of view that Busia emphasised in his first work.

This is by the way. In a direction more in conformity with our present concern, are the contributions made by the Goody team, notably by Esther Goody, to the theory and method of family research, by their studies in Gonja. These have brought out something which we had not previously known much about in regard to Ghanaian social systems, at least not in the systematic detail which Esther Goody has brought to the fore, namely, the existence of a cognatic kinship base in a stratified political order. We had known previously that there was a tendency for marriage in the patrilineal northern subsistence communities to be more stable than in the matrilineal Akan groups. We had associated this with the locus of rights in uxorem and in genetricem, as Laura Bohannan called them, their mode and degree of transfer and the ritual and jural sanctions deployed to maintain them. Patrilineal marriage admits matrilineal, complementary filiation as we now designate these connections, since it does not signify complete transference of a woman to her husband's descent group or complete forfeiture by her of filial and sororal status. But it pins residence down and in consequence it pins the socialisation process of children down. In a very strict way in a patriarchal household, it generates closed joint families. Matrilineal marriage is much more of an

apparently inescapable concession to the force of the incest taboo and it tends to be associated with an open domestic system with split residence - split in space, split over time both in the individual's life time and in the sequence of the generations; split for the spouses, split for the children and so on. The Gonja state of affairs is peculiarly interesting because it so resembles other cognatic systems in Africa and elsewhere. It appears to entail a deeply built in instability of marriage, the grave socialisation disadvantages of which are in part compensated for by the institution of fostering. Esther Goody has just completed an extensive and I believe revolutionary study of this which among other qualities, in my opinion also marks the coming of age of quantitative methods in intensive, monographical social anthropological research.

What one might ask, apart from the notoriously fickle nature of women all over the world, are the sociological factors behind differences in marriage stability and consequently differences in the consistency and the homogeneity of the socialization process? As far as Ghana is concerned, intensive anthropological field research in a number of areas is just beginning to throw some light on this, and some interesting data have been provided in the book by Barrington-Kaye. One fact seems to be the relative jural and political status of men and women. Where women have no autonomous jural status equal to that of men, reflected not only, for instance in property, succession and inheritance rights, but in ritual and political status relevant to ancestors and office, where in other words they do not have that status, but remain what I call perpetual jural minors, always under a male guardian (father, brother and husband) there it seems that marriage tends to stability. Where on the other hand, women have jural parity with men, as in Akan society, marriage tends to be of secondary importance by comparison with the basic source of jural and citizenship status, that is the lineage. As we know the Akan lineage, like its patrilineal counterpart in the north and east,

never relinquishes its rights in the members as expressed in the ultimate right, which is the right over their bodies in life and death - the bodies created by the lineage blood. Incidentally one thing that anthropological research has taught us is to be very careful in our use of such ethno-centric expressions as "blood kin" or "full-blood" of "half-blood" kin. The Akan are not the only people who have a cultural valuation and theory of the blood as a unilaterally transmitted component of the person, which is a slightly inferior component compared to the spiritual component that is transmitted from the other side. Gonja then, which is now being opened up to our enquiry in a most significant way, lies somewhat nearer to the Akan family system, as it does culturally. It is a pity that intensive research has not yet reached the Dagomba area which is obviously close to Gonja not only geographically but also culturally. There is a beginning a little further north in Dr. Susan Drucker Brown's work on Mamprussi but she has hitherto concentrated on the kingship. However, her data on family and kinship institutions suggest that the Mamprussi have a cognatic system with a marked patrilateral bias.

This prompts me to hail with special pleasure the recent arrival of the first studies in Ewe ethnography, in the modern sense, on our scene. Nukunya's book and Fiawoo's as yet unpublished dissertation now enable us to see how the Ewe fit into the sociological and ethnographic map. Among them it seems that patriliney has jural dominance, but it seems also as if a cognatic framework underpins the system. Reading Nukunya's book, (which I had the pleasant duty of first seeing as a Ph.D. thesis) is a bit tantalising in that there are features of Ewe kinship and family structure which strike me as basically like the patrilineal paradigms of the north, but there are other features that are quite obviously like Akan matriliney. What I suspect is significant here is the political context of the Ewe family and kinship organisation of which I dare say we will hear more later. Other researches which would add to our picture, both as to theory and as to factual data, are coming along fast in as

yet unpublished material, a foretaste of which is happily provided by this conference. Some of Christine Oppong's studies of urban elite families are already known and more will be on the way. By looking into the heart of conjugal and family relations this type of study develops some of the anthropological insights of the past further and more intensively.

I must not fail to remark on one other point of great significance that has emerged in the past fifty years of research in this field. The family as opposed to the descent group, is, as I have said, the reproductive unit and it is therefore the basis of the social phenomena that are the subject of demography. Anthropologically speaking the meeting point of the family and descent group lies in the connection between successive generations in the relations of what we now call filiation. One of the most interesting contributions which has come out of anthropological field research in Ghana over the past forty years has been the elucidation of these connections. Rattray hints at them and others have built on this. Essentially, successive generations are tied together in mutual ambivalence, that strange mixture of love and hate, autonomy and dependence, discipline and revolt which parents universally see happen. What has been fascinating in the context of Ghanaian social anthropology has been to discover how conscious traditional Ghanaian cultures are of this crucial factor in human social behaviour. Here our family studies link directly to studies of religion, especially to studies of the forms of ancestor worship that are characteristic of West African social systems in general. It is significant also for that most distinctive of anthropological concerns in this field, a concern that I always cite when I am asked about the differences, if any between sociology and social anthropology. I point out that the anthropologists start their studies of family organisation by enquiring about a feature that sociologists are generally quite unaware of, even in their own language, and in their own society. I refer to the



language, the terminology, of family and kinship relations. Every year in Cambridge, for many years now, I have asked my first year students to "hands up" all those who use first names, Christian names or given names in addressing their parents. The incidence is about two per cent year after year, and all these turn out to be either cases of individuals with step-parents or they turn out to be somewhat bohemian. One goes on to enquire into the meaning of these customs and this comes to classical anthropological subjects, like respect and familiarity and joking relationships, as well as the conflicts and stresses that are the very texture and tissue of family life and shows how they are reflected in the kinship terminology.

When one gets as far as this, one comes up against some ultimate problems. Why, for instance, in Akan society do people bother to get married at all? It seems superfluous, as we know from the discussions of the implications that we have had in seminars round this table! And what is it that gives to kinship, however its range may be restricted in comparison with traditional patterns and however the emphasis may be shifted in the balance between patrilateral and matrilateral, conjugal and filial connections, what is it that gives it that tenacious and irresistible grip on human conduct? This is one of the most fundamental problems of family research, and Ghana offers unrivalled opportunities for dealing with these and other fundamental problems of universal importance. I would like to stress that they are problems of universal importance, not merely of Ghanaian interest because every piece of work done here also has wider implications, by reason of the great variety of traditional familial systems which can be observed here and by reason of the context of the political, economic and cultural changes towards the European pattern that can be taken into account. It is welcome and important that a new and more numerous generation of Ghanaian scholars, than we had twenty five years ago, is now concerned with these problems.

I cannot end without referring to a few studies of a more general kind that have a bearing on the problems we are here concerned with, in particular such works as Polly Hill's study of migrant cocoa farmers and Brokensha's work on social change in Larteh. The persistence of traditional patterns of family structure, both matrilineal and patrilineal, and their apparent adaptability to modern economic and social changes are well documented in these studies. Mention must also be made of the contributions, during the past decade, of demographers such as Caldwell, Gaisey and Addo. Their surveys and analyses of census data seem to offer striking confirmation of the findings of the anthropologists and sociologists who have worked intensively.

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